

# German media steps up drumbeat for war and militarism

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Leading German media outlets are responding to the intensification of the Syrian war with calls for more war and militarism. The lead article in Tuesday's edition of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* by Hubert Wetzel is a thinly veiled appeal for an intervention by tens of thousands of ground troops in Syria. Wetzel focuses his anger on the alleged retreat carried out by the United States under President Barack Obama.

Obama saw "little need to invest American money, blood and prestige in this dusty corner of the world," Wetzel wrote. His "persistent retreat from the Middle East" had "contributed to the creation of a vacuum," and the space was being "filled by chaos alone." Among the producers of the "chaos" Wetzel naturally avoided naming the NATO powers, which have been spreading death and destruction throughout the region for more than 25 years, but instead pointed to Iran and Russia, which "in the Middle East are conducting the most brutal type of geopolitics conceivable."

While "all of the desperadoes and outlaws, who are fighting from Tunisia to Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq [...] brought, in the bloodiest sense of the word, their greatest firepower" and fire "out of all cylinders," the "US President, who was once the sheriff in this part of the world, only [has] a pocket knife," Wetzel complained. But this did not provoke "respect or fear from anyone." On the contrary: the "world power America" has "nothing more to say" in the Middle East and as a result is "not taken seriously by its allies, and certainly not by its opponents."

Wetzel and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* place chief responsibility for the "dark future" resulting from this state of affairs on the American population. "Obama's employer, the American people," wants "the US no longer to be the sheriff," he rages. "There is no support worth talking about in the population or Congress for a

large intervention in Syria, Libya or Iraq to defend an abstract regional or global order."

In an essay in the latest edition of *Der Spiegel*, Dirk Kurbjuweit attacks the European population in similar terms. "The public in the West is like a jury which decides on intervention." "The Germans" above all, have had "enough of wars for all time, and therefore let their politicians know their view in polls: we'd rather not." Kurbjuweit complained that politicians "can take decisions against prevailing opinion. But in the case of the Syrian war, Angela Merkel has not done this yet."

What Kurbjuweit is proposing are wars in violation of international law and justified with pseudo-humanitarian arguments. "Interventions ended the wars in the Balkans," he wrote. "The West sent bombers, without the authorization of the UN in the case of Kosovo. This was a violation of international law. And there was no trial. But the killing is over."

To enforce massive military interventions against the will of the population, Kurbjuweit proposes, in all seriousness, labeling those as war criminals who reject militarism and war. "Can failure to act be a war crime?" he asked provocatively. "A difficult question. But the question 'how could it happen?' is about responsibility. And responsibility on these issues begins at an early stage."

Kurbjuweit's cynical programme is thus, "Pacifism, yes, but an armed pacifism. For it, the old formula does not apply: war, never again."

Wetzel and Kurbjuweit are part of an entire layer of German journalists with close ties to foreign policy think tanks and government circles, which have been relentlessly propagating the poison of militarism for more than three years, despite the historical crimes of German imperialism.

As early as 2013, Wetzel called in a comment for the

firing of “a salvo of cruise missiles on the headquarters of Bashar al-Assad’s army.” Kurbjuweit, who has since become deputy editor of *Der Spiegel*, published his notorious article “The transformation of history” just days after German government representatives announced the end of the era of military restraint at the Munich Security Conference.

In it, Kurbjuweit attacked Fritz Fischer, who, in his 1961 book “Germany’s aims in the First World War,” demonstrated that the German empire bore considerable responsibility for the outbreak of World War I. Fischer’s theses were ‘in principal “outrageous,”’ he cited the Berlin political scientist Herfried Münkler as proclaiming.

On the Second World War, Kurbjuweit provided a platform for the now dead Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte, who had propagated the notion since the Historikerstreit of the 1980s that fascism was a legitimate response to Bolshevism. Nolte declared in the article, among other things, “I am more and more convinced that we should attach more weight to the role played by the Poles and the British [on the question of war guilt] than is usually the case.” At the same time, he blamed the Jews for “‘their own part in the gulag,’ because some Bolsheviks were Jews.” Kurbjuweit remarked that this “has long been an argument of Jew-haters,” only then to add, “But this man [Nolte] was not wrong about everything.”

Kurbjuweit also cited the Berlin-based historian Jörg Baberowski, an outspoken defender of Nolte, as saying, “Hitler was no psychopath, he was not vicious. He did not want the extermination of the Jews to be discussed at his table.”

Two-and-a-half years have passed since these despicable statements and it has become ever clearer that the relativising of the historical crimes of German imperialism has served to prepare new wars and crimes. The latest articles from Wetzel and Kurbjuweit provide further evidence of this.



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